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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/797,876	03/10/2004	Anthony Dip	TPS-007	5070

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EXAMINER

MATTHEWS, COLLEEN ANN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2811

DATE MAILED: 07/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/797,876

Applicant(s)

DIP ET AL.

Examiner

Colleen A. Matthews

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8,10,11 and 13-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8,10,11 and 13-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Applicant's election of Claims 1-8, 10-11, and 13-20 the reply filed on 06/09/2006 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. **Claims 1-8 and 13-16 and 18** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,909,151 to Hareland et al. (Hareland) in view of Interfacial Characteristics of HfO₂ Films Grown on Strained SiGe by Atomic-Layer Deposition, Applied Physics Letters, Vol. 84, No. 7, 02./16/2004, pp. 1171-1173 to Cho et al (Cho).

4. **Regarding claim 1**, Hareland discloses a method of forming a semiconductor device (Figures 5A-5E), the method comprising: providing a substrate (502); forming a SiGe surface layer (508/520) having an average Ge content less than about 10 at.% (less than 25%, col 9 lines 22-24) on the substrate; depositing a high-k dielectric layer (526) onto the SiGe surface layer; and forming an electrode layer (530) on the high-k dielectric layer.

Hareland lacks disclosing forming an oxide layer between the high-k dielectric layer and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer, the oxide layer being formed during one or both of said depositing and an annealing process after said depositing.

Cho teaches an oxide layer (SiO_x and GeO_x) formed between the high-k dielectric layer (HfO_2) and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer (page 1171 3rd paragraph in right column, lines 1-11), the oxide layer being formed during the depositing (Figure 3a) and an annealing process (Figure 3b) after said depositing.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Hareland to include an oxide layer grown between the high-k dielectric layer and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer as in Cho in order to modify device properties such as flatband voltage and trap charge density to improve device performance (page 1173 2nd paragraph in right column, lines 8-10).

5. **Regarding claim 2**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses the substrate provided with an initial oxide layer (Figures 5A-5E, element 506, col 9 lines 9-12) prior to forming the SiGe (508/520) surface layer.

6. **Regarding claim 3**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes forming the SiGe surface layer by performing thermal chemical vapor deposition, plasma-enhanced chemical vapor deposition, atomic layer deposition, or sputtering (chemical vapor deposition, page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 1-4).

7. **Regarding claim 4**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes forming the SiGe surface layer by exposing the substrate to a process gas including a Ge-containing gas (page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 1-4)..
8. **Regarding claim 5**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 4 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes the Ge-containing gas comprising at least one of GeH₄ or GeCl₄ (GeH₄, page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 1-4).
9. **Regarding claim 6**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 4 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes annealing the substrate either during said exposing, after said exposing, or both during and after said exposing (page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 9-12).
10. **Regarding claim 7**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 4 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes the process gas comprising a Si-containing gas (page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 1-4).
11. **Regarding claim 8**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 7 as above. The modification with Cho described above also includes the Si-containing gas comprising at least one of SiH₄, Si₂H₆, or SiH₂Cl₂ (SiH₄, page 1172, 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 1-4).
12. **Regarding claim 13**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses the SiGe surface layer is less than about 1000 angstroms thick (less than 30 nm / 300 Å), col 10 lines 27-32).

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13. **Regarding claim 14**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses the SiGe surface layer is between about 10 - 300 angstroms thick (less than 30 nm / 300 Å, col 10 lines 27-32).

14. **Regarding claim 15**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses the high-k dielectric layer comprises at least one of HfO₂, HfSiO_x, ZrO₂, ZrSiO_x, TiO₂, Ta₂O₅, Al₂O₃, or SiN (HfO₂, , ZrO₂, TiO₂, Ta₂O₅, col 11 lines 3-14).

15. **Regarding claim 16**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses the high-k dielectric layer is between about 5 – 60 angstroms thick (5-15 Å, col 11 line 5).

16. **Regarding claim 18**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above. Hareland also discloses etching the electrode layer and the high-k dielectric layer (col 11, lines 42-46).

17. **Claims 10 and 11** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,909,151 to Hareland et al. (Hareland) in view of Interfacial Characteristics of HfO₂ Films Grown on Strained SiGe by Atomic-Layer Deposition, Applied Physics Letters, Vol. 84, No. 7, 02./16/2004, pp. 1171-1173 to Cho et al (Cho) in further view of U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0218189 to Christiansen et al. (Christiansen).

18. **Regarding claims 10 and 11**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 above. Hareland lacks disclosing the SiGe surface layer

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comprising a plurality of SiGe sublayers each with different Ge content and also lacks disclosing the SiGe surface layer comprising a graded Ge content.

Christiansen discloses a plurality of SiGe sublayers (Figure 8 layers 45, 42, 25, and 35) each with different Ge content (paragraph 82, last 3 lines) and the SiGe surface layer with a graded Ge content (Figure 9 layers 46, 37, 37 and 43, paragraph 38). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Hareland to have the SiGe surface layer comprising a plurality of SiGe sublayers each with different Ge content and the SiGe surface layer comprising a graded Ge content as in Christiansen in order to reduce defects normally present in a single SiGe layer (Christiansen, paragraph 15).

19. **Claim 17** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,909,151 to Hareland et al. (Hareland) in view of Interfacial Characteristics of HfO₂ Films Grown on Strained SiGe by Atomic-Layer Deposition, Applied Physics Letters, Vol. 84, No. 7, 02./16/2004, pp. 1171-1173 to Cho et al (Cho) as applied to claim 1 above in further view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,259,881 to Edwards et al. (Edwards).

20. **Regarding claim 17**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above with an Si substrate. Hareland in view of Cho lacks disclosing introducing the substrate into a process chamber of one of a single wafer processing system and a process chamber of a batch-type processing system. Edwards teaches introducing a substrate into a process chamber of a batch-type processing system (col 3 lines 6-13). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

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invention was made to further modify Hareland to include introducing the Si substrate into a process chamber of a batch-type processing system in order to maximize the add to the speed and flexibility of the substrate processing (Edwards, lines 14-17).

21. **Claims 19 and 20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,909,151 to Hareland et al. (Hareland) in view of Interfacial Characteristics of HfO₂ Films Grown on Strained SiGe by Atomic-Layer Deposition, Applied Physics Letters, Vol. 84, No. 7, 02./16/2004, pp. 1171-1173 to Cho et al. (Cho) in further view of U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0209816 to Yamaguchi et al (Yamaguchi).

22. **Regarding claim 19**, Hareland in view of Cho discloses the method according to claim 1 as above and Cho also discloses the oxide layer formed during the annealing process by exposing the substrate to a gas (N₂, page 1172 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 9-10). Hareland in view of Cho lacks teaching exposing the substrate to an oxygen-containing gas. Yamaguchi teaches annealing by using an oxygen or nitrogen gas to form an oxide film (paragraph 39). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Hareland to have the annealing done by oxygen gas because well known manufacturing processes are available for annealing with oxygen.

23. **Regarding claim 20**, Hareland discloses a method of forming a semiconductor device (Figures 5A-5E), the method comprising: providing a substrate (502); forming a SiGe surface layer (508/520) having an average Ge content less than about 10 at.% (less than 25%, col 9 lines 22-24) on the substrate; depositing a high-k dielectric layer

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(526) onto the SiGe surface layer; annealing the substrate (col 9 line 57); and forming an electrode layer (530) on the high-K dielectric layer.

Hareland lacks teaching one of the depositing and annealing comprising exposing the substrate to a gas to form an oxide layer between the high-k dielectric layer and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer. Cho teaches annealing comprising exposing the substrate to a gas (N_2 , page 1172 2nd paragraph in left column, lines 9-10) to form an oxide layer (SiO_x and GeO_x) between the high-k dielectric layer (HfO_2) and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer (page 1171 3rd paragraph in right column, lines 1-11).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Hareland to include the annealing exposing the substrate to a gas to form an oxide layer between the high-k dielectric layer and an unreacted portion of the SiGe surface layer as in Cho in order to modify device properties such as flatband voltage and trap charge density to improve device performance (page 1173 2nd paragraph in right column, lines 8-10).

Hareland in view of Cho lacks teaching exposing the substrate to an oxygen-containing gas. Yamaguchi teaches annealing by using an oxygen or nitrogen gas to form an oxide film (paragraph 39). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Hareland to have the annealing done by oxygen gas because well known manufacturing processes are available for annealing with oxygen.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Colleen A. Matthews whose telephone number is 571-272-1667. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8AM-4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Lee can be reached on 571-272-1732. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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